

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### **SOUTHCO INC**

Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center

#### **Southco Successfully Trains and Expands Operation Excellence Team**

##### **Client Profile:**

Southco, Inc., was founded in 1899 as a specialty pipe manufacturer for the Pennsylvania oil industry. In 1945 Southco entered into the specialty fastener and latch business and has grown into a global leader in engineered access hardware. The company's engineered access hardware solutions include key "touch points" such as locks, latches, captive fasteners, hinges, handles and other innovative products. Its application covers industries such as marine, automotive, off-highway / construction, RV/caravan, industrial machinery, enclosures, HVAC, medical equipment and network, telecommunications and computers. Southco employs 300 people at its facility in Concordville, Pennsylvania.

##### **Situation:**

Southco's passion, vision and focus is to grow its business by helping customers differentiate the engineered "touch points" of its products so they become easier to sell and use by the end users. The company strives to realize this vision by investing in a strong technical sales and marketing team backed by engineering and operational excellence. Southco already had an extremely capable internal team dedicated to operational excellence. To support their aggressive growth objectives, the company recognized it must expand this team into a critical mass of qualified, capable, credentialed continuous improvement players working collaboratively across the globe. The Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center (DVIRC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, had a Lean Certification program in place, and Southco decided to investigate its usefulness in helping them reach their objective.

##### **Solution:**

Working collaboratively with the Southco Operational Excellence team, the DVIRC customized its Lean Certification program for Southco's unique operational environment. For example, Southco's own electronic kanban system was taught as part of DVIRC's standard Pull Kanban workshop. Likewise, DVIRC utilized Southco's global scorecard during the workshop on Lean Performance Measures. The DVIRC Lean Certification combines both theory and application. Southco Certification Candidates must complete pre-work (course work, kaizen, 5S), 5 days of intensive, hands-on learning in the classroom and in the workplace, assigned team projects that generate measurable impact, and guided reading. Now in its fourth year of work with the DVIRC, Southco has a deployed cadre of more than 170 Certified Lean Champions, distributed across all global locations. As the acquisition strategy has been achieved, the champions are charged with ensuring that both core and assimilating operations begin using advanced lean processes and tools to continue to lower inventory, reduce lead time, decrease unplanned downtime and reduce errors.

##### **Results:**

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- \* Certified over 170 Lean Champions.
- \* Exceeded \$4 million in value-added impact.

### Testimonial:

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